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General and complete disarmament: confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. On 8 December 2003, the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/43, entitled "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context", in which, inter alia, it called upon Member States to refrain from the use or threat of use of force in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and upon Member States that have not already done so to open consultations and dialogue in the regions of tension without preconditions. The Assembly urged States to comply strictly with all bilateral, regional and international agreements, including arms control and disarmament agreements, to which they are party. The Assembly also urged, in the context of confidence-building measures, the maintenance of military balance between the States in the regions of tension consistent with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments and encouraged the promotion of unilateral, bilateral and regional confidence-building measures to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States with a view to exploring possibilities of furthering efforts towards confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context, particularly in the regions of tension, and to report on the subject to it at its fifty-ninth session. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request and on the basis of information received from Member States.

2. In this connection, a note verbale dated 18 February 2004 was sent to all Member States requesting their views. The replies received are reproduced in section II below. Any replies received subsequently will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from States

China

[Original: Chinese]
[6 May 2004]

1. China believes that the establishment of practical and feasible confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional contexts plays a positive role in maintaining international peace and stability and relaxing regional tensions.

2. China holds that in the process of establishing confidence-building measures, countries should adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. A new security concept centred on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation should be advocated. Actual conditions and special features in different regions should be taken into full consideration. The principles of sovereignty and voluntarism should be fully upheld, and the guideline of tackling the easier issues while shelving the more difficult ones in a step-by-step manner should be pursued conscientiously.

3. China welcomes some constructive steps on confidence-building measures taken by other regions and countries, and believes that, while it is necessary to draw upon the experience of others, it is all the more important to adhere to the principles

of fitting the confidence-building measures into local conditions and seeking common ground while preserving differences.

4. The Government of China has always attached importance to and pushed very hard for promoting confidence-building measures with neighbouring countries. It has actively advocated the conclusion of border treaties or agreements between concerned parties through dialogue on an equal footing and in accordance with the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and refraining from targeting any third country or threatening or harming other countries' security and stability, so as to maintain common security for all parties concerned, as well as regional peace and stability.

5. In 1996 and 1997, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and China successively signed the Agreement on Confidence-Building in the Military Field along the Border Areas and the Agreement on Mutual Reduction of Military Forces in the Border Areas.

6. In 1993, China and India signed the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control in the China-India Border Areas. In 1996, the two countries signed the Agreement on Confidence-Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the China-India Border Areas.

7. In 2002, China and the ASEAN countries signed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, committing themselves to exploring possible means to build confidence on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

8. Within the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), China submits an Annual Security Outlook every year, and hosted some programmes on confidence-building measures, including the ARF professional training programme on China's security policy, the 1997 session and 2003 session of the Meeting of the ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures, and the fourth ARF annual Meeting of the Heads of Defence Colleges/Institutions. China will hold two other ARF confidence-building measure activities, namely a seminar on alternative development and a seminar on enhancing cooperation in the field of non-traditional security issues.

9. China has been actively taking part in the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia process initiated by Kazakhstan. China supports the conference guideline papers, namely, the "Alma-Ata document" and the "Catalogue of confidence-building measures."

Holy See

[Original: English]
[28 February 2004]

The Holy See has no national report to present on the matter.

Israel

[Original: English]
[1 June 2004]

1. Israel believes that confidence-building measures are an effective and significant instrument for improving relations and promoting good-neighbourliness in the regional and subregional context. Israel is of the view that ideas on how to promote and identify regional confidence-building measures should be first and foremost developed and agreed upon in the relevant regional and subregional context between the regional parties themselves. Confidence-building measures should be presented and negotiated, freely and directly, between the regional parties with a view to reducing tensions and facilitating political dialogue and cooperation. We believe that this sequence should be preserved if confidence-building measures are to fulfil their objective.

2. Moreover, it is clearly apparent that confidence-building measures cannot be imposed by some States or even by the international community. Imposing confidence-building measures would undermine their essential objective, namely the enhancement of security and trust between the regional parties.

3. We believe that introducing ideas regarding regional and subregional confidence-building measures and their formation, initially in the United Nations, in the manner described in the above resolution, is counterproductive and runs counter to the principle that confidence-building measures should be freely agreed upon and negotiated between the regional parties. This would not be conducive to the building of trust and confidence in the regional and subregional context.

4. Israel would therefore encourage States to present ideas for confidence-building measures to their relevant regional counterparts through direct dialogue and exchange of views in the pursuit of the objective of enhancing confidence and reduction of tensions.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[26 May 2004]

Lebanon supports all international confidence-building measures and agreements, the maintenance of military balance, and efforts to combat the unrestrained proliferation of various types of weapons in the region and the world, because of the grave threat it poses at the global, regional and subregional levels. Lebanon also wishes to reaffirm its adherence to international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principles of the sovereign equality of States and regional integrity. The primary obstacle facing Lebanon in confidence-building at the regional and subregional levels is Israel, which continues to occupy part of Lebanese Arab territory, seeks to deny Palestinians the rights of return proclaimed in General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and carries out daily terrorist acts inside occupied Palestine.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[6 May 2004]

1. Mexico reiterates that the adoption of confidence-building measures between States, particularly if they are applied in a comprehensive manner, can make a significant contribution to the strengthening of peace and security and, therefore, to the creation of appropriate conditions for achieving progress in the promotion, development and adoption of disarmament, arms-control and non-proliferation agreements at the international, regional and subregional levels.

2. Mexico is of the opinion that confidence-building measures which States undertake must be of both a military and non-military nature. Those of a military nature must in turn refer both to conventional weapons and to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

3. Mexico also believes that the adoption of confidence-building measures in a regional or subregional context must take into account the prevailing political, military, economic and social situation in the region and that such measures must be adopted in the initiative and with the agreement of the States of the region concerned. Such agreements must be implemented in good faith.

4. It must be stressed that, while confidence-building measures are no substitute for concrete disarmament measures and cannot replace verification measures, which constitute a fundamental element of arms-limitation and disarmament agreements, they do contribute to the development of a systematic process in which such voluntary, unilateral, even-handed and politically binding measures, by their very nature, create a fertile ground so that these measures can become legally binding in the future.

5. Mexico agrees that confidence-building measures must be established on the basis of the principle of security and without prejudice to national security policies. It also believes that the criteria for and applicability of such measures at the regional and subregional context must take due account of the provisions of paragraph 93 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as well as the "Guidelines for appropriate types of confidence-building measures and for the implementation of such measures on a global or regional level", developed by the Disarmament Commission.

6. Mexico takes note of the emphasis in General Assembly resolution 58/43 on the settlement of disputes by peaceful means and the need to increase efforts to reduce tensions in those regions with specific problems. In accordance with its peaceful tradition, Mexico will continue to promote dialogue as well as the application and development of international law.

7. With regard to the renunciation of the use of force for the settlement of disputes, Mexico promotes, through the principles of its foreign policy, the prohibition of the threat or use of force and favours compliance with and implementation of the international legal framework as the appropriate instrument for guaranteeing international peace and security.

8. In relation to paragraph 4 of the resolution, concerning compliance with arms control and disarmament agreements, the Government of Mexico is of the opinion

that the adoption of such instruments is a sovereign decision taken by each State, pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, which establishes the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence.

9. As for transparency in the acquisition, development and deployment of conventional and strategic weapons, Mexico complies with measures in that regard and annually submits information to the United Nations and the Organization of American States for the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the Standardized International Reporting of Military Expenditures, respectively. Mexico reaffirms that the ultimate objective of confidence-building measures is to strengthen international peace and security and to contribute to the prevention of war of any kind and nuclear war in particular.

Nicaragua

[Original: Spanish]
[3 June 2004]

1. On 4 May 2004, the Government of Nicaragua began destroying man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) in compliance with Presidential Decree No. 027-2004, which orders and authorizes the gradual destruction of portable anti-aircraft rockets on the basis of the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America and other international agreements concluded by Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan National Assembly issued a resolution of support for the decision of the President of the Republic (Legislative Resolution No. 007-2004).

2. The first group of objects destroyed consisted of 333 portable anti-aircraft rockets of the 9M32M type (MANPADS), four rocket launch tubes and 333 thermal power sources. In July, as a continuation of this first stage, the Nicaraguan army plans to destroy another 333 ground-to-air rockets. This is all within the framework of an appropriate balance of power in Central America.

3. This initiative, encouraged by President Enrique Bolaños, is designed to guarantee security in the Central American region, implement an appropriate balance of power and contribute to hemispheric security and hence international security.

Panama

[Original: Spanish]
[24 May 2004]

1. The Republic of Panama recognizes the need to hold consultations and dialogue with a view to achieving progress in the search for stability in the regions of tension. Panama thus deems it important that States comply with all bilateral, regional and international agreements to which they are party, including arms-control and disarmament agreements.

2. In this connection, Panama recommends the adoption of a proposal to establish a reasonable military balance between States, and participation in the United Nations System for the Standardized Reporting of Military Expenditures as a confidence-building measure at the regional level. Panama believes that the

development and realization of communication between neighbouring civil or military authorities in accordance with their border situations, as well as the identification and development of activities to promote cooperation between them, should act as a measure to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities.

3. Lastly, Panama believes that the experience gained in connection with the implementation of the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America as a confidence-building measure at the subregional level can serve as a model for other regions and subregions at the global level.

4. The Republic of Panama is convinced that such measures will help to build confidence in the regional and subregional context.

Philippines
(on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations)

[Original: English]
[1 June 2004]

Follow-up action for the realization of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea

Background

1. Regional peace and stability in the South China Sea is an issue of common interest to the ASEAN member States and China. Various efforts have been undertaken to promote peace and stability in the South China Sea including the Workshop on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea hosted by Indonesia since 1990, a Track II forum aimed at bringing about the eventual transformation of the South China Sea from an arena of potential conflict into a venue for actual and mutually beneficial cooperation. This was followed by the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea issued on 22 July 1992 in Manila. The most recent is the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, which was signed on 4 November 2002 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

2. The Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea is the first political document jointly issued by ASEAN and China on the South China Sea issue. It reflects the commitment of all sides to seek ways for building trust and confidence in order to promote a peaceful, friendly and harmonious environment in the South China Sea for the enhancement of peace, stability, economic growth and prosperity of the region based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea of 1982, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and other universally recognized principles of international law.

3. In line with the provision of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea which states that pending the peaceful settlement of territorial and jurisdictional disputes the parties concerned undertake to seek ways to build trust and confidence between and among them, China and ASEAN agreed to undertake cooperative activities and that the modalities, scope and locations, in respect of

bilateral and multilateral cooperation, would be agreed upon by the parties concerned prior to their actual implementation.

4. In this context, the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting, held from 26 to 28 August 2003 in Surabaya, agreed that the Track one symposium proposed by the People's Republic of China should be held in Indonesia, as Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee. Indonesia agreed to host this symposium in early 2004.

5. The ASEAN claimant States met in Putrajaya on 6 April 2004 to discuss in detail the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

6. The claimant States reiterated their commitment to the full and timely implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, and agreed on the need to discuss specific measures for its realization in a forum that will reflect its importance. They agreed to propose the convening of an ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting, which will review the current political situation in the South China Sea, review current bilateral and multilateral cooperative mechanisms, and identify specific ways and means to concretely implement the Declaration.

7. The claimant States agreed to take the following course of action:

Step 1

- The ASEAN claimant States would convey their agreement on the course of action formally to the rest of the ASEAN members. It was noted that an occasion to do that would be during the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on the ASEAN Security Community, to be held in Indonesia.

Step 2

- ASEAN would convey its common position to China during the ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Consultations.
- An ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting on the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea would be convened with the consent of ASEAN and China.
- The ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting on the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea will assess the current political situation in the South China Sea and mandate the creation of an ASEAN-China working group to draw up guidelines for the implementation of the Declaration, which would move the process further towards the adoption of a regional code of conduct in the South China Sea.
- The ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting would draw up the terms of reference for the joint working group and the symposium.
- Additional expert groups could be created to look into specific issues, as necessary.

Step 3

- Convening of the ASEAN-China symposium, at the level of Track 1.5, involving government officials from ASEAN and China, think tanks and academia.
- The symposium would be convened in an ASEAN country on a date to be mutually agreed by ASEAN and China.
- Follow-up symposia could be held as and when necessary.

8. Among the topics to be considered by the symposium would be:

- An assessment of the situation and inventory of existing bilateral/multilateral activities in the South China Sea.
- Humane treatment of all persons in danger or in distress.
- Safety of navigation and communication at sea.
- Joint training in maritime search and rescue operations.

Conclusion

9. The follow-up action outlined above is envisaged as a process leading to the eventual realization of the regional code of conduct.

Confidence-building measures in the Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines-East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA)

Customs, immigration, quarantine and security initiatives

10. The differing customs, immigration, quarantine and security rules, regulations and procedures of the BIMP-EAGA member countries have posed various constraints on the growth area's ability to generate productive economic activity. This apparent lack of coordination between the concerned agencies has also hampered the subregion's efforts to curb transnational crime due to differing standards of policy and implementation.

11. The recommendation for customs, immigration, quarantine and security harmonization was first broached by the Philippines during the 5th BIMP-EAGA Senior Officials' Meeting held from 4 to 6 July 1996 in Davao City. In July 1999, the Bureau of Immigration offered to host a customs, immigration, quarantine and security conference during the 9th Senior Officials' Meeting/7th Ministerial Meeting in Labuan, Malaysia.

12. In October 2000, the Bureau of Immigration and the Mindanao Economic Development Council conducted the first Mindanao-Palawan Customs, Immigration, Quarantine and Security Workshop in Davao City, Philippines. The Mindanao-Palawan Customs, Immigration, Quarantine and Security Task Force was formed at that meeting.

The Philippine customs, immigration, quarantine and security primer

13. Prior to the envisioned EAGA-wide harmonization, steps must first be undertaken to harmonize and streamline customs, immigration, quarantine and security rules and regulations at the Philippine-EAGA level. The first Philippine

primer on customs, immigration, quarantine and security was drafted by the Mindanao Economic Development Council secretariat, in cooperation with the Bureau of Immigration, in August 2000. The primer aims to provide the business sector in the Philippines, as well as the private sector and government counterparts in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia with a complete reference listing of all Philippine customs, immigration, quarantine and security rules, regulations and procedures to be followed in conducting trade and other business-related activities in BIMP-EAGA.

The Zamboanga-Sandakan, General Santos-Bitung and Davao-Manado Bilateral Customs, Immigration, Quarantine and Security Workshops

14. The Zamboanga-Sandakan Bilateral Customs, Immigration, Quarantine and Security Workshop was held in Zamboanga City on 8 January 2004 and the General Santos-Bitung/Davao-Manado Workshop was held in General Santos City on 14 January 2004. These workshops between the BIMP-EAGA customs, immigration, quarantine and security agencies discussed issues of border security and identified possible opportunities for cooperation and specific arrangements that will streamline and harmonize the existing customs, immigration, quarantine and security procedures, rules and regulations on a port-to-port basis.

The first BIMP-EAGA Security Officials' Workshop, 29 January 2004, Davao City

15. The Philippine hosting of the first BIMP-EAGA Security Officials' Workshop in Davao City on 29 January 2004 was the culminating activity of the three bilateral customs, immigration, quarantine and security meetings, during which special focus was given to security concerns within the subregion. The objectives of the one-day workshop were as follows:

(i) To increase the participation of security officials utilizing existing BIMP-EAGA structures and networking to enhance border security and create an opportunity for the delegates to meet their respective counterparts;

(ii) To identify common problems/issues affecting security within the subregion;

(iii) To identify opportunities for cooperation among the member countries, in order to formulate specific arrangements that will streamline existing security rules, regulations and procedures in each member country;

(iv) To intensify efforts on information exchange and dissemination to prevent the movement of terrorists and criminal elements; and

(v) To establish person-to-person or port-to-port contacts between the BIMP-EAGA security officials for direct access and easy communication.

16. The following are the highlights of the discussions of the working groups on land, aviation and maritime security:

(a) Land security. To regulate the movement of migrants, there is a need for information dissemination on trans-border rules, regulations and procedures. To reduce and prevent the commission of transnational crimes (piracy, kidnapping for ransom, smuggling and other terrorist activities) member countries must establish an

intelligence network and exchange information. A working group on intelligence and the establishment of a secured web site were proposed.

(b) Maritime security. There are poor communication linkages between law enforcement agencies. The threats on ships, port facilities and the environment can be reduced or prevented through implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code and the Code of Practice on Security in Ports. The exchange of information on the implementation of EAGA members and bilateral arrangements are important. Countries should also exchange information on types of transnational border crimes in EAGA.

(c) Aviation security. There is a need to publish security rules, regulations and procedures in the member countries. Countries should also establish communication channels and information exchange, and reporting of procedures in identifying and apprehending undesirable aliens. It was agreed that the BIMP countries would formulate a primer for aviation security procedures and regulations for the subregion. This primer is currently being drafted.

ASEAN-Japan Exchange Year 2003 project
ASEAN-Japan Security Symposium 2003
Tokyo, 9-10 October 2003

17. In celebration of 2003 as the Year of ASEAN-Japan Exchange, the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) and the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), Singapore, convened a symposium in Tokyo on 9 and 10 October 2003 to review the progress of, and prospects for, ASEAN-Japan security cooperation. The symposium brought together senior officials and analysts from the leading institutes of strategic and international studies in ASEAN countries and their Japanese counterparts.

18. ASEAN-Japan security dialogue stands at a critical juncture at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In the 25 years following the establishment of the ASEAN Cultural Fund, a process in which former Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda played a key role, ASEAN and Japan established a broad and substantive range of economic and sociocultural relations within the political and security framework of the cold war period. The Asia-Pacific region now confronts a new geopolitical environment in the post-cold war and post-11 September period. There is a need to review the increasing multifaceted interfaces between ASEAN-Japan relations and the new and complex geopolitical environment.

19. The symposium identified a number of political and security challenges for ASEAN-Japan cooperation. These include:

Counter-terrorism measures;

Export controls and transnational crimes;

Military modernization and weapons of mass destruction;

Maritime security;

Peacekeeping operations (including joint training and exercises);

Regional security frameworks.

20. The above list of issues, symposium participants stressed, is not exhaustive, as there may be other critical issues that deserve attention, such as aviation security.

21. These are complex issues that require more studies to be conducted by senior officials from both ASEAN and Japan. Symposium participants therefore recommended that the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit in December 2003 designate a Senior Officials' Meeting to study more systematically how these changes in the region's geopolitical environment impact ASEAN-Japan relations and to recommend proposals on how ASEAN and Japan can more effectively cooperate in order to meet these new geopolitical challenges.

22. Symposium participants also recommended that a Track II network of officials (acting in their private capacities) and representatives of strategic and international studies institutions be established to support the deliberations of the Senior Officials' Meeting. The symposium nominated JIIA and IDSS to offer their services to their Governments, and to convene in 2004 a team of experts from Japan and ASEAN to further study and recommend measures to be adopted by Japan and ASEAN so as to better manage the new political realities and security challenges of the twenty-first century. Symposium participants recommended that their ministers consider drawing funds from existing Japan-ASEAN funds to support JIIA and IDSS in convening two workshops (one in Tokyo and the other in Singapore), leading to a second symposium in Singapore that will draw up a report and a series of recommendations for consideration by the heads of government when they meet again.

Poland

[Original: English]
[7 May 2004]

1. Poland is deeply committed to the United Nations idea of promoting agreements to strengthen regional peace and security. We welcome resolution 58/43, adopted by the General Assembly on 8 December 2003, as an important contribution to international peace and security. We hope that Member States will strengthen their efforts to bring about closer cooperation in the field of confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context.

2. Polish policy on conventional arms control plays an important role in the security policy at the regional and subregional levels. Poland is a party to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Treaty on Open Skies and is a participating State in other conventional arms-control agreements concluded within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, including the Vienna Document 1999, which still remains the base of the confidence-building measures system in Europe. Being also a member of the European Union (EU) the Republic of Poland is going to meet its obligations in the area of common foreign and security policy, such as the EU programme for preventing and combating illicit trafficking in conventional arms and the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. All the above-mentioned agreements and initiatives constitute an essential element of cooperative European security and will continue to remain an important tool for strengthening security as long as military security risk exists, although they may be different in nature and scope from those of the past.

3. We believe that the Member States should undertake all necessary measures to increase transparency and confidence and to ensure that overall objectives of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation remain in harmony. The efforts we have been making so far must be intensified. We consider confidence-building, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation as important components of conflict prevention and recognize that the United Nations is designed to play a crucial role in this field by promoting broader, more comprehensive cooperation and dialogue at both the regional and subregional levels. A good example of successful cooperation at the subregional level is an "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on complementary confidence- and security-building measures" signed on 16 April 2004. It has the aim of enhancing confidence, security and good-neighbourly relations between the Republic of Poland and Ukraine.

4. Poland with its positive experience of the results of the implementation of the European conventional arms and control regime, strongly encourages other Member States that have not already done so to begin negotiations on these kinds of agreements. We are also convinced that strengthening and expansion of regional and subregional cooperation and the implementation of the existing bilateral and multilateral agreements to which they are parties will contribute to further strengthening confidence between them, as well as security at the regional and subregional levels and in the United Nations community as a whole. For our part, we are ready to share with interested States our experience gained during the negotiation and implementation of the above-mentioned conventional arms-control agreements.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[4 May 2004]

1. The State of Qatar enjoys good-neighbourly relations with all neighbouring States and is bound to them by shared interests. The State of Qatar has hastened to take prompt and effective action in respect of confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels through its relations with all neighbouring States by means of dialogue, compliance with agreements signed with all regional and international parties and the maintenance of military balance.

2. The State of Qatar is taking effective measures aimed at building confidence between States to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities between neighbouring States within a regional and international context.

Venezuela

[Original: Spanish]
[18 May 2004]

The Government of Venezuela is in favour of any initiatives aimed at the adoption of confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context, under United Nations auspices. However, the situation of tension or conflict that is

being addressed should be given a precise and detailed evaluation in order that efforts towards the prevention or peaceful settlement of disputes will meet with the parties' approval. Although it is true that a consensus exists concerning the overarching need for peace as a prerequisite for development, the complexities of each situation of tension or conflict are the result of States' traditionally opposing conceptions of particular situations. It is to address this situation that the Republic of Venezuela supports confidence- and security-building measures, particularly political and diplomatic measures, aimed at strengthening and supporting the culture of disarmament, peace, development and cooperation between States and their citizens.